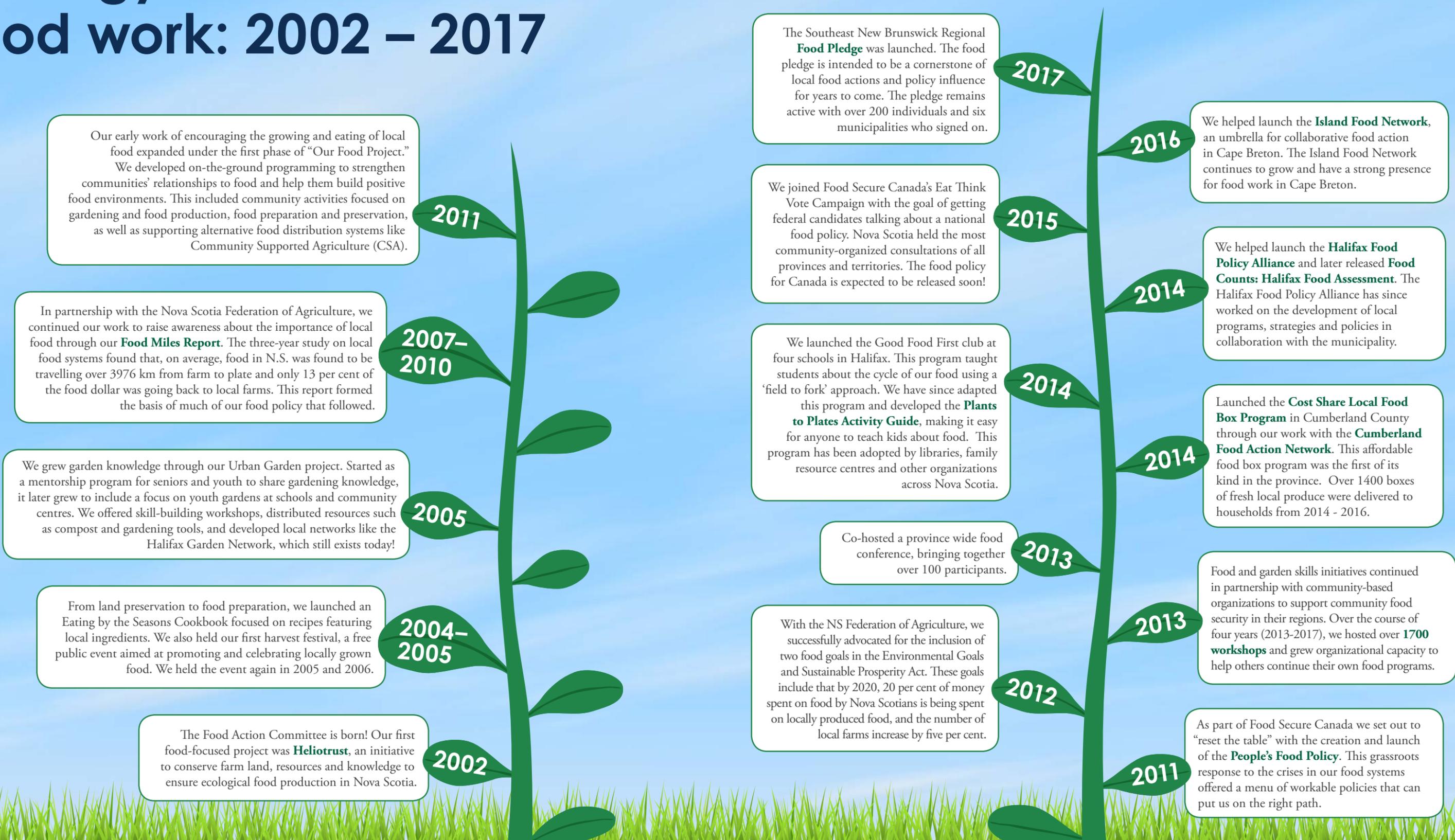


# A look back at the Ecology Action Centre's food work: 2002 – 2017

## OUR FOOD PROJECT

Under this program our work expanded to include a 'pickles to policy' approach, with the goal of building positive food environments in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. During this period, our staff grew to seven, plus a sister project with United Way Moncton in New Brunswick. Here are a few highlights:



Our early work of encouraging the growing and eating of local food expanded under the first phase of "Our Food Project." We developed on-the-ground programming to strengthen communities' relationships to food and help them build positive food environments. This included community activities focused on gardening and food production, food preparation and preservation, as well as supporting alternative food distribution systems like Community Supported Agriculture (CSA).

2011

In partnership with the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture, we continued our work to raise awareness about the importance of local food through our **Food Miles Report**. The three-year study on local food systems found that, on average, food in N.S. was found to be travelling over 3976 km from farm to plate and only 13 per cent of the food dollar was going back to local farms. This report formed the basis of much of our food policy that followed.

2007-2010

We grew garden knowledge through our Urban Garden project. Started as a mentorship program for seniors and youth to share gardening knowledge, it later grew to include a focus on youth gardens at schools and community centres. We offered skill-building workshops, distributed resources such as compost and gardening tools, and developed local networks like the Halifax Garden Network, which still exists today!

2005

From land preservation to food preparation, we launched an Eating by the Seasons Cookbook focused on recipes featuring local ingredients. We also held our first harvest festival, a free public event aimed at promoting and celebrating locally grown food. We held the event again in 2005 and 2006.

2004-2005

The Food Action Committee is born! Our first food-focused project was **HelioTrust**, an initiative to conserve farm land, resources and knowledge to ensure ecological food production in Nova Scotia.

2002

The Southeast New Brunswick Regional **Food Pledge** was launched. The food pledge is intended to be a cornerstone of local food actions and policy influence for years to come. The pledge remains active with over 200 individuals and six municipalities who signed on.

2017

We joined Food Secure Canada's Eat Think Vote Campaign with the goal of getting federal candidates talking about a national food policy. Nova Scotia held the most community-organized consultations of all provinces and territories. The food policy for Canada is expected to be released soon!

2015

We launched the Good Food First club at four schools in Halifax. This program taught students about the cycle of our food using a 'field to fork' approach. We have since adapted this program and developed the **Plants to Plates Activity Guide**, making it easy for anyone to teach kids about food. This program has been adopted by libraries, family resource centres and other organizations across Nova Scotia.

2014

Co-hosted a province wide food conference, bringing together over 100 participants.

2013

With the NS Federation of Agriculture, we successfully advocated for the inclusion of two food goals in the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act. These goals include that by 2020, 20 per cent of money spent on food by Nova Scotians is being spent on locally produced food, and the number of local farms increase by five per cent.

2012

We helped launch the **Island Food Network**, an umbrella for collaborative food action in Cape Breton. The Island Food Network continues to grow and have a strong presence for food work in Cape Breton.

2016

We helped launch the **Halifax Food Policy Alliance** and later released **Food Counts: Halifax Food Assessment**. The Halifax Food Policy Alliance has since worked on the development of local programs, strategies and policies in collaboration with the municipality.

2014

Launched the **Cost Share Local Food Box Program** in Cumberland County through our work with the **Cumberland Food Action Network**. This affordable food box program was the first of its kind in the province. Over 1400 boxes of fresh local produce were delivered to households from 2014 - 2016.

2014

Food and garden skills initiatives continued in partnership with community-based organizations to support community food security in their regions. Over the course of four years (2013-2017), we hosted over **1700 workshops** and grew organizational capacity to help others continue their own food programs.

2013

As part of Food Secure Canada we set out to "reset the table" with the creation and launch of the **People's Food Policy**. This grassroots response to the crises in our food systems offered a menu of workable policies that can put us on the right path.

2011